

APLU'S

POWERED BY PUBLICS

SCALING STUDENT SUCCESS

Request for Proposals: Seed Funding for Collaborative Projects

Issue Date: September 23, 2020

Due Date: November 23, 2020

Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this one-time grant opportunity is to support collaborative projects emerging from the Powered by Publics clusters that are equity-focused, data-driven, and advance knowledge in one or more areas of our framework (Affordability, Holistic Student Supports, Teaching & Learning). Primary objectives of this funding are to:

- a) Support specific, measurable, and achievable projects that will incrementally advance the strategic priorities of Powered by Publics and progress toward shared goals (increasing degree completion and halving equity gaps).
- b) Deepen collaboration among the universities in Powered by Publics clusters, and help campuses turn their good ideas into action with an infusion of resources.

Process

The intent of this process is to stimulate innovative ideas while minimizing the administrative burden to institutions and ensuring a transparent and equitable distribution of funds. An overview: 1) any Powered by Publics member(s), independently or with other institutions, may submit a proposal in response to this opportunity, 2) proposals will be reviewed by a committee, which may include members of the Powered by Publics National Advisory Council and other experts from our network, 3) brief follow up calls will be held with finalists, 4) awards will be announced by December 2020.

Award Information

The total funding pool is \$150,000. Each proposal should include a budget with expenses up to \$30,000. Funds may be distributed to one institution leading the project, or multiple institutions that have agreed to partner. The total number of awards will be determined by how many applications APLU receives. Awards will be made until the funding pool is expended. Once awards are made, funds will be distributed as lump sum payments to the institution(s). APLU will request a brief progress report after nine months and again after 18 months, by which time funds are expected to be expended by the institution(s). Funding for this opportunity comes from a General Operations grant awarded to APLU by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Eligibility

All current university members of Powered by Publics are eligible to submit a proposal, either individually or in partnership with other universities. Competitive proposals will be accompanied by written indication of support for the proposed idea or concept from other institutions in the cluster. Proposals from three (3) or more institutions are encouraged. Proposals from minority-serving institutions are encouraged.

Selection Criteria

Each proposal will be assessed for the following equally weighted criteria:

- 1) **Collaborative Orientation:** How well the proposed project goals and activities engage the rest of the cluster in collaboration.
- 2) **Equity Focus:** The potential of the proposed project to advance equity for low-income, students of color, and/or first-generation students.
- 3) **Alignment with Framework Areas:** The degree to which the proposed project addresses common problems in one or more areas of the Powered by Publics framework: Affordability, Holistic Student Supports, and/or Teaching & Learning
- 4) **Use of Data:** The quality of the project's plans for evaluating progress and success, including data to be collected.

1. Collaborative Orientation

This funding opportunity aims to support projects that deepen collaboration among the universities in Powered by Publics clusters. To that end, proposals should clearly articulate how the institution(s) will engage other members of the cluster in a collaborative way. A competitive proposal will address how the institution(s) will engage the rest of the cluster in *process* and in sharing *outcomes*. Examples of collaborative process: gathering input from other campuses in the group or sharing decision-making power with other campuses. Examples of collaborative outcomes: sharing lessons learned from the project with the rest of the cluster or allowing other members of the cluster to use and benefit from the products created. ***Applicants are requested to share their project idea with their cluster via email or during one of the monthly cluster meetings to seek buy-in and feedback from other campuses.***

2. Equity Focus

Proposals should explicitly name the student groups that will benefit, in terms of racial/ethnic identity, income, first-generation status, or other dimensions important to the university and the cluster. Proposal goals should be aligned with Powered by Publics goals of increasing degree completion for low-income, first generation, and students of color, and halving equity gaps for these groups. If the proposed project engages participants on campus (faculty, staff, students), please articulate plans for assembling a diverse group, establishing an inclusive learning or working environment, and sharing decision making power.

3. Alignment with Framework Areas

Proposals should address at least one of the core content areas from the Powered by Publics framework (Fig. 1):

- **Affordability:** includes affordability for students (e.g., cost of attendance, financial literacy, textbook affordability) as well as innovative university business models to reduce expenses on the institution side.
- **Holistic Student Supports:** the constellation of support services and networks that ensure students have what they need to succeed. Includes support for students' basic needs, physical and mental health and wellness, social organizations and affinity groups, orientations, career services, childcare, and systemic initiatives (e.g., CCA Momentum Year).
- **Teaching and Learning:** concerns student success in the classroom as well as reforms to academic structures and programs. Includes topics such as: faculty development, use of adaptive courseware and other digital learning technologies, student learning outcomes, institutional learning outcomes, general education reform, student sense of belonging and mindset, and transformation of degree programs and pathways.

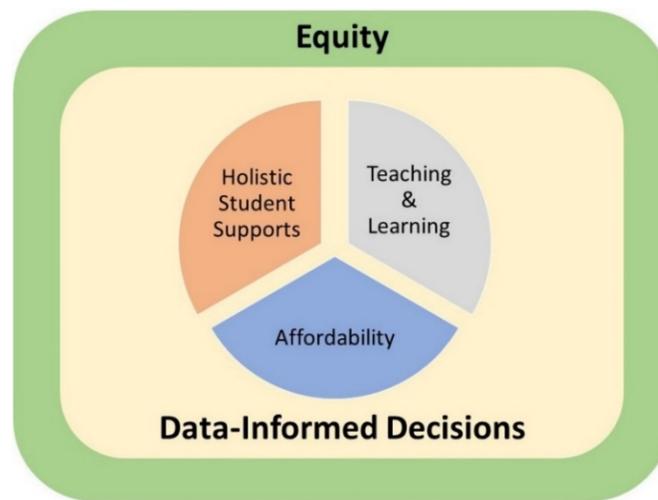


Figure 1: Powered by Publics Framework

4. Use of Data

Each proposal should indicate how progress will be evaluated, including how success will be defined and measured and what data will be collected. APLU is agnostic as to methodology and types of data. Qualitative data, including that which may be intangible but observable, is just as acceptable as quantitative data. Proposals should indicate how lessons learned will be shared with the Powered by Publics clusters and the broader field.

How to Apply

Institutions should send the following materials via email to jmichaels@aplu.org by the end of the day (local time) on **November 23, 2020**. Further details for each item are described below.

1. Description of the proposed project (1-3 pages) including:
 - Goals
 - How the project addresses the four selection criteria
 - Brief management plan that describes who will be responsible for executing the project, including the role of any APLU staff (cluster managers).
2. Estimated budget

3. Emails or letters that show support for the project from other universities in the cluster

1. Description

The description of the proposed project should contain project goals, information about how the project addresses each of the selection criteria, and a management plan. The description is short by design to reduce the burden of applying for this opportunity. Cluster managers may also assist campuses with drafting and finalizing these materials, if needed.

Goals

Some questions to consider when articulating the project's goals:

- What problem does this project seek to solve? What outcomes do you expect?
- What will be delivered, to whom, and by when?

Selection Criteria

Some questions to consider when articulating the project's alignment with the four selection criteria:

- How will the project engage other institutions in the cluster, both in process and in terms of outcomes? How will you share the results and lessons learned with others?
- How does the proposed project aim to advance equity for low-income, students of color, and/or first-generation students?
- Which framework area(s) does this project address (Affordability, Holistic Student Supports, Teaching and Learning)?
- What data will you use to measure progress and success? Where will you get these data?

Management Plan

Please share information about who will execute the project, including the PI or team lead, other members of the project team, any interns or student workers, and the APLU cluster manager. It is not necessary to include individuals' CVs. **Applicants are requested to review proposals with their cluster manager prior to submission to ensure adequate capacity.**

For each person please indicate the following:

- Name and title;
- Brief description of role as it relates to the proposed effort and responsibilities; and
- Expected time commitment (i.e., number of hours per month or percent FTE).

2. Budget

Please indicate how the requested funds will be expended at each partnering institution as well as any other sources of revenue (e.g., institution match). Funds should be expended within 18 months of the date of the award. Allowable cost categories include:

- Personnel
- Travel

Certain items cannot be funded by APLU, including:

- Indirect costs (F&A, overhead)
- Professional association membership dues/fees
- Conference registration fees
- Endowments or similar funds
- Scholarships and other forms of direct aid to students
- Textbooks or course materials
- Job/career fairs
- Gift certificates or cards
- Fundraising costs
- Capital expenses

- Consultants (including honoraria)
- Supplies
- Other Direct Costs

3. Commitments from other institutions

Please include any expressions of support from other institutions in the cluster. Formal letters are not needed; copies of email exchanges from key staff/leaders are satisfactory.

General Timeline

September 23, 2020 – RFP distributed to Powered by Publics members

November 23, 2020 – Proposals due

December 10, 2020 – Awards announced, and agreements sent to campuses. Funds distributed within 10 business days of an executed agreement.

Terms and Conditions

The right is reserved, as the interests of APLU may demand, to revise this RFP prior to the date set for receiving proposals. Such revisions, if any, will be announced by amendment to this solicitation. Copies of such amendments, as maybe issued, will be furnished to all institutions. If the revisions are of such a nature as to mandate material changes in information requested, the date set for receiving proposals may be postponed by such number of days as, in the opinion of APLU, will enable the institutions to revise their proposals. In such cases, the amendment will include an announcement of the new date for receiving proposals

APLU may cancel this RFP, in whole or in part, at any time before signing a contract. Issuance of this RFP creates no obligation on the part of APLU to award a contract.

APLU will not pay any costs the institution may incur in responding to this RFP, including those associated with proposal preparation and demonstrations. APLU assumes no liability for costs or damages incurred by the institution during or resulting from this RFP process.

APLU reserves that right to accept/reject any and/or all proposals, in whole or in part, received as a result of this RFP or to negotiate separately with any sources whatsoever in any manner necessary to serve the best interests of the Powered by Publics initiative.

There will be no public opening of the proposals. Proposals will not be returned to the institutions.

Participation in the RFP process is the institution's sole decision. Although APLU intends to adhere to the process as stated herein, they reserve the right to modify the process, requirements, and/or timetable. The RFP should not be construed as a contract to purchase services, and APLU shall not be obligated in any manner until a written agreement has been duly executed, prior to the commencement of any work. Receipt of proposal by APLU will be considered acceptance of these terms and conditions. Each institution represents and warrants that is available to participate in the awards program as outlined in the RFP in a professional manner and, furthermore, that is under no conflicting obligations that may interfere with its duties to APLU because of work it may have undertaken with others if its proposal is accepted or that it has disclosed any potential conflicting obligations.